

EWSLETTER Issue 47 June 2020

Dear Friends

I'd like to acknowledge and congratulate Scott Saddler AM. Senior Director of the NAC for his recent inclusion in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours List being appointed a Member, AM, in the General Division. His citation reads 'for significant service to public administration and supporter and mentor of indigenous youth.'

The second phrase -'supporter and mentor of indigenous youth." What does that mean? Scott has been a public servant for well over 20 vears right around Australia. But not many public servants can claim that they are from the Wiradjuri mob from the Wagga Wagga Riverina area. Scott can!

He may have told you some of this already, but in every workplace across Australia he has employed and trained many young Indigenous

men and women, becoming their role model and their mentor. He has provided opportunities for their development and advancement.

In 2018 Scott was awarded the ACT Reconciliation Award by Kathy Leigh. Director General, CMTEDD, for this extra, but important, work he carries out on a regular basis.



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"Scott's leadership and advice supports the retention and career development of the trainees while also providing an avenue to strengthen their connection with their culture." In this particular mentoring program, he leads young Indigenous men and women in the ACT Government's Directorate of Property and Venues, Chief Minister and Treasury and Economic Development. The citation concludes with 'His passionate commitment to young Indigenous employees reflects the unique contribution he has made as a public servant.'

There are other Indigenous features that Scott has initiated which have already been implemented at the NAC. Maybe at the next Volunteers Meeting, whenever that will be, it could be the first item on his agenda!!

His appointment as an AM in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours is so richly deserved

At the recent Friends AGM I welcomed all Friends and Volunteers able to attend. I particularly wanted to thank the Council Members for their ongoing support over the past year. They are a remarkable group with many skills, talents and expertise so generously shared. In my role as Chair, I couldn't manage without them and thank them most sincerely.

We extended a very warm welcome to our new Council Member Nicole Pietrucha.

The Friends' key achievements for 2019

The first was the finalisation of our Strategic Plan. We are now in sync with that of the NAC Strategic Plan. Our Plan dovetails into a very flexible Annual Partnership Plan, and Memorandum of Understanding with the NAC. We believe we are now achieving and fulfilling our main purpose which is, supporting the NAC.

The second key achievement is the Friends' sponsorship of the new Arboretum Bus. It is our Friends' financial support in the form of monthly lease payments for five years, that has made this possible. Thank you, Friends! I believe the bus is due to arrive very soon at the Arboretum.

And beyond the achievements, there were many happy Friends events during 2019: In March last year, I launched the Friends' Zigzag Garden. The Arboretum offered this exclusive opportunity to be part of their vision to grow 100 Gardens and I congratulate the Friends for taking the initiative and sponsoring a Garden in the Central Valley – Garden No 19, the Saltbush Garden. This garden has just recently been completely paid for, thanks to the generosity of various Friends and

proceeds from events such as the Market Stalls.

The 2019 Jake Keller Scholarship was awarded to Carol Dale who has been recently working with the horticultural team in the English Oaks in particular but in many other locations across the NAC.

We had some wonderful guest speakers discuss their fields of expertise at our Seasonal Talks including...

Professor Kate Auty, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment spoke on environmental reporting and communicating the science to the general public: we learned a lot about carnivorous plants with Bob Little and Owen O'Neill spoke, courtesy of the Australasian Carnivorous Plant Society; the NAC's own Christine Callen wowed us with tales and photos from her trip to Wellington Botanic Garden, Gisborne Eastwoodhill National Arboretum and Zealandia. Mike Woolley entertained us with Bonsai information from the national collection, and Julianne Evans spoke about Forest Bathing! 2020 has to date been quieter for the Friends, but we have been beavering away behind the scenes. The Friends' Executive plus Mel O'Hanlon from the Curatoreum. Christine Callen and Cally Earnshaw, the NAC's newish Community Engagement Officer, have met a few times and have developed a proposal for a new edition of the Arboretum Book. A Brief has been formed describing the rationale and nature of the proposal.

Council has formally signed off the project and a Working Group under the leadership of Jocelyn Plovits, former Chair of the Friends, will undertake the substance of the Project. With this formal decision to work on a new edition, the current Arboretum Book has been discounted to \$20.00.

A Trailer for the Working Bees has been sponsored by the Friends and it is ready to go. The Friends' logo will be proudly displayed announcing our sponsorship of this most useful vehicle, which holds all manner of tools and equipment in one tidy place.

The Wollemi Pine Project is significant in that Friends Council approved the funding in February 2020. The main purpose of the project is to propagate, grow and sell Wollemi Pine trees from 100 seeds collected at the NAC. The contract for propagation and growing has been contracted out to Yarralumla Nursery. We await the first progress update - soon I'm told. Significant benefits are revenue for Yarralumla Nursery, for the Friends and the NAC.

The Harvest Group hasn't been able to have their very popular Market Stalls over the past few months. However, the Discovery Garden continues to be well tended by volunteers led by Ange McNeilly. It is so much admired by all who wander past.

Working Bees on Tuesdays and Thursdays have begun again only recently and there is much for them to do. 23 Volunteers attended on a recent Thursday morning!

Warm Trees 2019 was a spectacular success with our diplomatic partner, the Embassy of the Republic of the Netherlands in 2019. So many bicycles, tulips and creative arts featuring wheels and other Dutch culture! Unfortunately, Warm Trees 2020 has been cancelled. But we do have the commitment of support from our diplomatic partner, the High Commission of Singapore, for 2021. Colours are red and white so keep knitting!

The Seat Sponsorship Program continues with sponsorships being sought on a regular basis. Just recently within two days of each other, two seats in the Children's Garden were sponsored; there remains one other to be sponsored in that particular Garden.

And with the launch of the Tracks and Trails last year, opportunities for seats and picnic tables have raised considerable interest with their amazing locations and wonderful views.

All funds from these sponsorships go into our Friends Trust Account and are available to support the next request or project from the NAC.

I would like to recognise the great work done by the Friends' Membership and Parking Passes officers. These ladies quietly go about their work completing this vital task behind the scenes. Thank you very much for this work. It is much appreciated.

Kind regards Trish

Trish Keller, OAM

(This message from Trish is substantially her Annual Chair's report to the AGM. In case you missed it.)

Executive manager update

Dear Friends

The last few weeks have seen a welcome return to increased activity onsite. It has been great to see Friends, volunteers and visitors alike returning to the Village Centre and National Bonsai and Penjing Collection. National Arboretum Canberra and Stromlo Forest Park have been responding to the changes in safety measures as we move through Canberra's Recovery Plan, and the community response has been fantastic. From lunchtime on 19 June, seating will be available for up to 100 people inside the Village Centre, with additional seating on the North and South decks. If you haven't yet visited the Village Centre and seen the new servery that was installed over the last few months as part of an ACT Government stimulus. we invite you to enjoy the improved space and service it provides.

The Horticultural team is undertaking pruning and mulching now into the winter season, and this Tuesday and Thursday welcomed back its working bees along with the Friends sponsored trailer. A huge thank you to volunteers who mulched the Silver Birch and Spanish Birch trees this week.

Another project that the horticultural team has been working on is the planting of Forest 15: Xanthorrhoea trees. This has involved finalising planting locations to create a cascading effect down the hill, with boulders clustered in formation with the trees. The area is fenced off for safety and

a small number of trees have been planted and we are waiting for them to are you hellosettle in before placing remaining trees and landscaping rocks.

While on Forest news, a reminder that the Central Valley gardens are selling quickly - if you would like to purchase a garden to leave an environmental legacy at NAC with a group of your friends or family please contact scott.saddler@act.gov.au

STEP will receive a new entry associated with the new carpark construction which will improve access from the Village Centre. A new dedicated bike diversion path has been established around STEP garden and signage will be installed shortly. As STEP is an educational garden, bikes are not permitted on its paths.

In the coming weeks, you will see the new National Arboretum Canberra website. Please send any feedback to shelly.parer@act.gov.au and watch the website for updates on winter school holiday programs (following COVID19 regulations).

NAC moved its
Reconciliation Day
celebration online with
the support of our
Indigenous Tourism
Officer, Jessika
Spencer. Jessika is a
proud Wiradjuri woman
and talented weaver
and has created
artwork as a prize for a
National Reconciliation
Week competition.

Major projects are underway and progressing well, with the water project (additional water from Lake Burley Griffin) boring under the Tuggeranong Parkway, a new pump shed installed near Lake Burley Griffin and pipe trenching being installed. The overflow carpark is almost at completion with landscaping to come,

due for completion around mid-July, while the much needed backup generator has been installed to support the Village Centre. Both the National Arboretum Canberra and Stromlo Forest Park have submitted various project bids for ACT Government Stimulus package for later this calendar year.

I was surprised and thrilled to receive the award of Member of the Order of Australia, specifically for significant service to public administration, and as a supporter and mentor of Indigenous youth.

Scott Saddler AM
Acting Executive Branch Manager
National Arboretum Canberra and Stromlo
Forest Park



Artwork created by Jessika Spencer

National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia.

Bonsai Pot Acquisition Prize

One part of Bonsai Week 2020 that did go ahead was the awarding of the Bonsai Pot Acquisition Prize.

It was planned that, as a part of the Gala Night celebrations, three prizes for an Australian-made bonsai pot would be presented. First prize \$1000, second \$600 and third \$400. The pots would then become a part of the NBPCA pot collection.

The purpose of the competition is to promote the art of bonsai pottery within Australia and to obtain high quality pots for use within the NBPCA.

To provide a framework for the design of the pot, the competition required the entrants to design a pot for the Native Tree Acquisition prize winner announced at the 2019 Bonsai Week – an Agonis flexuosa. These species only occur naturally in Western Australia but this specimen was grown from seed collected from a street tree in Wangaratta, Victoria.



Agonis flexuosa - Willow myrtle

Thirteen entries were received from potters living in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, ACT and South Australia.

The winning pot was created by Pat Kennedy – as was the second placed pot.



First prize: Pat Kennedy



Second prize

The third prize was won by a South Australian potter, Luke Parsons.

All of the winning pots were an oval shape, with natural colours and textures, and were slightly shallower than the current rectangular pot.

We'll have to wait a while until we see the Agonis in a new pot because experience has shown that Australian native trees respond much more favourably to re-potting in the warmer months.

The complete set of pot entries can be viewed on the <u>NBPCA Facebook page</u>.

Mike Woolley



Third prize: Luke Parsons

Trees in Ireland

This was sent to me by a friend in Ireland and I thought you might be interested to read what is happening in tree world elsewhere. It is edited from a blog post by Liz Maguire, March 2020.

Despite its reputation as "forty shades of Green" Ireland has only 11% of forest. Scientists estimate that there are nearly 3 trillion trees on Earth, but that 15 billion are cut down annually by humans. For emphasis, a "trillion" has twelve zeros!

In Europe, Ireland has the least amount of forest. This deforestation can be traced back to the Ice Age, but also accelerated by modern humans! In addition to the obvious benefits of trees, the native animals and flora of Ireland need more trees to thrive.

In 2019 the Irish government launched a Climate Action Plan. One goal of the plan is to plant 22 million trees a year in Ireland. This is done through land owners partnering with organisations to coordinate reforestation efforts. Studies indicate that the effects of planting saplings can significantly help the environment.

<u>Trees on the Land</u> is an organisation which works with farmers, smallholders, community groups, councils, schools and landowners as a cross-border initiative which covers the 32 counties of the Republic and Northern Ireland. 75% of the trees will be planted in the Republic of Ireland, and 25% will



be planted in Northern Ireland. They plant small woodlands, coppices, orchards, hedgerows, shelter belts, agroforestry projects, reforestation sites and larger woodland, and have planted more than a million trees at several thousand sites in Ireland and Northern Ireland since 2013.

The Tree Council of Ireland has more information on tree projects and native Irish trees

CITIZEN SCIENCE

Why does the mesa oak forest seem so variable?

By Joanne Maples and Roger Hnatiuk

Have you noticed that some of the mesa oak trees (*Quercus engelmannii*) in Forest 21 are different from each other? Others have noticed it and there's been a few theories about why.

The mesa oaks were planted over a decade ago in a forest right at the top of the Central Valley zig-zag pathway and also across Forest Drive toward the Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park. Though still in their youth, they now have plenty of foliage and many have produced acorns aplenty.

Enter Roger Hnatiuk, who felt that a small citizen science project in Forest 21 could help to see if there are in fact meaningful differences to be seen among its oaks. Coopted were Joanne Maples and Maggie Hawes, who then spent many hours in the first half of 2018 walking up and down those rows of oaks, while trying hard not to lose their map position and, more importantly, giving every single tree the once over. Persistence is a virtue! Samples and photos were taken of any leaves or acorns that seemed 'different'. That is, different in leaf size or shape or acorn shape to that expected for mesa oaks.

After this reasonably systematic observation of the trees, the samples and photos showed that there is indeed quite a lot of variation between trees in both the leaves and acorns. Some example photos are below. So much variation is shown that it is reasonable to conclude that the mesa oak forest is not in fact purely a mesa oak forest. It is an **oak hybrid complex**.

But a complex of what? Roger went looking for records about the source seed and discovered that the acorns for Forest 21 trees came from three mesa oaks at the southern end of Caladenia Street, O'Connor. The trees in this street appear to have come from acorns collected in 1949 in Los Angeles, on San Pasqual Street near the north-west corner of CalTech, Pasadena California. The trees on San Pasqual Street, located using Google Maps, are fairly uniform in form. However, the

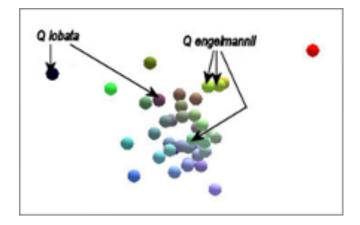
Arboretum's source trees were very near another oak species (*Quercus lobata*, valley oak) on Clianthus Street, O'Connor, which joins Caladenia Street on the latter's northern end, and about 400m from the source of our seed trees. *Q. lobata* is known to hybridise with *Q. engelmannii* following wind pollination, in the wild.

We didn't have access to genetic testing facilities, but we could examine details of the leaves and acorns to test the 'hybridity' hypothesis. Detailed measurements were made of 36 trees in Forest 21 plus the three source trees in Caladenia Street and two *Q. lobata* trees in Clianthus Street. Comparisons were made with descriptions and illustrations in Californian floras covering these two species. Results of one of the analyses (see below) demonstrated quite clearly that the Forest 21 oaks are not only variable, but that their variability is spread completely between the two putative parents' characteristics.

Knowing this, and consistent with the samples taken by Joanne and Maggie, it is clear that Forest 21 has not only *Q. engelmannii* genes present, but also has a **hybrid complex of** *Q. engelmannii* and *Q. lobata*. Perhaps about half of the trees in Forest 21 predominantly show only *Q. engelmannii* characters and the rest show combinations of both parents. Often it is easy to see a 'good mesa leaf' on one tree, but then the acorns are mixtures, and vice versa.



Tree D026: The acorn and leaves above are of the *Q. engelmannii* form.



Results of an analysis of leaves and acorns from Forest 21 and from O'Connor. The species-labelled spheres represent the five trees from O'Connor, while the other spheres represent Forest 21 trees. (This analysis was produced using the PATN numerical analysis package; for details, contact Roger Hnatiuk.)

To easily see some of this variation, next time you come up Forest Drive from the main gate and while passing Himalayan Cedar Road on your right, glance over to your left and up to the mesa oak on the horizon. You will notice that there are trees with greyish leaves and others with dark green leaves. This colour variation is one of many characters that are used to distinguish the two Californian species.

So, to what extent is Forest 21 a hybrid complex of *Q. engelmannii* and *Q. lobata*? The answer to this question will take a lot more walking up and down rows of oaks. Our samples so far indicate roughly half look like fairly good mesa oaks and the rest are likely hybrids. Maybe it won't be clear which trees in Forest 21 are 'true' *Q. engelmannii* until genetic testing can be done on trees as easily as we can measure their leaves now.

But the future of Forest 21 is bright. It now provides an excellent case study in biodiversity and how species evolve. Just as 'eucalypts' are capable of interbreeding, so are the 'oaks'. In the case of these two Californian oaks, they grow close to each other in the wild and are known to hybridise. One favours dry, relatively high in the landscape 'mesa' habitat (the mesa oak), while the other favours moister, deeper, richer soils of the valley bottom (the valley oak). Both the climate and landscape have seen major changes within the timescale that oaks in California and eucalypts in Australia have been evolving. Populations have been



Tree C360: The leaves have deep sinuses and the nut has parallel sides which then gradually come together towards the apex. The bracts have regularly shaped outer sides and the cup is shallow compared to the length of the nut. These are all characteristic attributes of *Q. lobata*.

separated, diverged genetically to produce different species and, with further changes, have come back together again both physically as well as genetically. 'Our oaks', in Forest 21, provide insight into the dynamics of species evolution.

And there is more to tell about the oaks of Forest 21. There are potential and, in our case, real uncertainties to using the truly time-tested method of collecting seed from street or garden trees. In the case of these wind-pollinated species, you may be very sure of the genetic line of the mother tree, but you don't know the paternal line without detailed genetic testing. This story is retold a number of times in the street trees of Canberra and almost surely in streets and gardens everywhere, when the seed has been obtained in the same way as for 'our oaks'.

Further information about this citizen science project has been placed on the Friends website under 'Citizen Science'. A short resource document for volunteer guides to use when speaking to visitors about Forest 21 will also soon be available.

Harvest Group and Discovery Kitchen Garden Update



The Discovery Kitchen Garden during lockdown felt a lot safer than going to the shops as there were few people around during that time. Now that isolation restrictions have eased and with two long weekends in a row as well as the opening of the Sprout Café, people are returning to the Arboretum in greater numbers. Excitement was palpable as children ran about and the car park filled to overflowing.



March and April are the months when much of the harvesting and processing of produce from the garden occurs. However, due to milder weather this year, many vegetables continued fruiting until much later. There was a bumper crop of green tomatoes towards the end of the season and while the small striped Lebanese eggplants were prolific, the same cannot be said for the large, hand-grafted Bonica eggplants which took longer to grow and fruited late so these will be planted out earlier this year.

The harvested vegetables were preserved as tomato relish; eggplant chutney; pickled green beans in olive oil; green tomato chutney and basil pesto. All these delicious preserves along with those made from figs from the forest, will be available for sale at the next Harvest Group Market Stall whenever that will be and hopefully in the near future so that some funds can be raised. Unfortunately, due to storage time limit, basil pesto will not be available for sale, which will no doubt disappoint some as this has been very popular in the past.

Now that isolation restrictions have been eased two volunteers, Chris Kemp and Sue Wright, have resumed their positions on the garden's maintenance roster and it is great to have them back!



Harvest Group volunteer hours for the period 1 July 2019 to 31 May 2020 totalled 1,117 hours 20 minutes (June 2020 has yet to be added). The Group's activities are enjoyable and a lot of fun so if there are any FNAC members who would like to join and participate, contact Harvest Group Leader, Colette Mackay, through the Arboretum.





Activities over the year have included sowing, growing and purchasing plants; harvesting, drying and packaging herbs and seeds; harvesting and preserving vegetables; harvesting and preserving figs from the forest; maintaining the Discovery Kitchen Garden; preparing for and attending Market Stalls; producing a recipe booklet for sale; developing the Wollemi Pine Propagation Project; liaising with the Arboretum and the Yarralumla Nursery; attending meetings; and writing monthly reports and newsletter articles.

With regard to the Wollemi Propagation Project, the advice received from Yarralumla Nursery is that 49 Wollemi Pine seeds have germinated so far and it is expected that more will germinate in the coming months.

Over the past few months, the Kitchen Garden has been planted with sweet peas, climbing peas and snow peas, broad beans, cornflowers, calendulas, pansies, ornamental kales, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and Tuscan kale. Iceland poppy



seedlings transplanted from punnets are being grown on to plant out when more robust and Flanders red poppies have germinated from seed collected the previous year and will also be planted out when larger. Come spring, the garden should be ablaze with colour!



Recent maintenance in the garden has included cutting back the white alyssum growing around the edge of the garden to rejuvenate it and alyssum seedlings also grown. Globe artichokes and French sorrel offsets have been transplanted to fill in gaps and nasturtiums affected by frost have been removed as have frosted leaves from other plants. French marigolds that have persisted until now will no doubt, over the next few months, succumb to frost. The scarlet runner beans have been cut to ground level and the whole garden has been covered with sugar cane mulch to insulate and retain moisture. Parsleys, both Italian and curly, are growing well. Maintenance over the winter months will consist of the occasional watering, fertilising, removal of damaged plants and planting poppy seedlings. Happy Gardening!















Working bees resume





Working bees recommenced at the Arboretum on Tuesday 15 June, with the first task being a makeover of the Silver birch forest. The main task was to strip mulch the trees. This involved applying a continuous strip of mulch - about 20cm deep - along the lines of trees. The effect is quite striking as it highlights the contoured planting pattern. Other tasks included weeding and irrigation loop repair.



The resumption of the working bees also saw the first use of the Friends' trailer, a custom converted standard trailer funded by the Friends. All of the tools required for working bees are now conveniently stored in one place and easily transported to the appropriate location, saving the NAC team time and effort in preparing for and tidying up after the activities.

The trailer contains many compartments for the storage of the various tools and is fully enclosed to keep them from 'wandering' as well as keeping them clean and dry.



Photos thanks to Mike Woolley

Nyssa sylvatica (Black Tupelo)

Forest 43



Forest 43, on the Visitor Centre side of Forest Drive.

Names

'Nyssa' is from the Greek word 'naiad' meaning water nymph, a reference to the habitat of some of the species in the genus; 'sylvatica' is exactly the same as for the European beech, Fagus sylvatica, and is from the Latin word 'silva' meaning of the wood or forest. 'Tupelo' is from two native American Creek words 'ito' meaning tree and 'opilwa' meaning swamp, also referencing its habitat.

It has a number of particularly regional common names including tupelo or black tupelo in the American south, while northward and in Appalachia it is more usually called black gum or sour gum. It is also known as pepperidge in the Northeast, and beetlebung on Martha's Vineyard.

Habitat

Nyssa sylvatica has a wide range in eastern North America, from southern Ontario and New England in the north, down to central Florida and east into Texas.

It is found in a variety of habitats throughout its wide range, growing from the creek bottoms of coastal plains, up to drier upper slopes and ridges at altitudes of about 900 metres in the Southern Appalachians. It will grow up to 1,100 meters elevation

Tree description

Nyssa sylvatica is a medium-sized deciduous tree which grows to 20-25 metres, with a trunk diameter of 50–100 centimetres.

It is the longest-living flowering plant in its range of eastern North America, capable of reaching ages of over 650 years.

The trees typically have a straight trunk with irregular branching. The bark is dark greybrown and flaky when young, but it becomes furrowed with age. One source says it then resembles alligator hide.

Uses

The flowers are a major source of wild honey, while the sour dark blue fruit are an important food source for migrating birds in the early autumn



The wood is hard, cross-grained, and difficult to split, especially after drying. Because of this it was used to make the hubs of heavy carriage wheels, pulleys and paving blocks.

Despite being such a hard wood, it is used for woodcarvings, and particularly for woodcarvings of wildlife. Tupelo was also sometimes called 'pioneer's toothbrush'. When a small twig is broken off sharply, it has a bundle of woody fibres on the end that can be used to clean your teeth.

And remember to watch out for a wondrous display along Forest Drive next autumn.

How to join the Friends

Visit **arboretumcanberra.org.au** to join online or to find out more about the benefits of being a member

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Email your details to: contact@arboretumcanberra.org.au and pay by funds transfer or cheque

UK

Complete the Application Form and mail it to:

The Secretary, Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra, PO Box 48, Campbell, ACT 2612, and pay by funds transfer or cheque.

Bank	details	for funds	transfer:

Westpac, Petrie Plaza, Canberra, ACT: BSB 032 719. Account: 375379 – please include surname in description.

Cheques payable to: Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc.

Membership type	1 year	2 years
Individual	\$45	\$80
Household	\$55	\$100
Concession *	\$25	\$40
Club/Association **	\$100	\$180
Business **	\$500	\$900

^{*} Pensioners, health card holders & students

Membership Application Form

Membership type:	
Title: First name:	
Last name:	
OR	
Club/Association/Business na	ame:
Address:	
Stat	e: P/code:
Email address for newsletter	and updates:
	Mobile:
Number of parking passes: .	
	e membership/s and parking pass
Signature:	
Date:	
Parking Pass	1 year
Friends' Annual Parking Pass	\$35 per vehicle
For a parking pass, please in number.	clude your vehicle's registration
Note: An Individual Member	is antitled to annly for one Parking

Pass at the Friends' rate and a Household Member is entitled

Parking passes are issued for one year from the date of purchase.

to apply for two Parking Passes at the Friends' rate.





^{**} See website for details